

Minister
of Natural Resources



Ministre
des Ressources naturelles

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0E4

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The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia, M.P.
Member of Parliament for Lac-Saint-Louis (Quebec)
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Colleague:

Thank you for your correspondence of June 15, 2018. In short, Canada does not yet have a federal policy for the long-term management of non-fuel radioactive waste.

Canada does, however, have the 1996 Radioactive Waste Policy Framework, which addresses the roles and responsibilities of both the federal government and the waste owners regarding the long-term management of radioactive waste, including nuclear fuel waste and other non-fuel radioactive waste. The Policy Framework can be found at: <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/uranium-nuclear/7725>.

The Policy Framework identifies three responsibilities for the federal government: to develop policy; to regulate; and to oversee waste owners. Under the Policy Framework, waste owners are responsible—in accordance with the “polluter pays” principle—for the funding, organization, management, and operation of disposal and other facilities required for their waste.

Waste owners are fulfilling their responsibilities by proposing projects for the long-term management and disposal of their waste. As a result, Canadian nuclear fuel waste owners have proposed a centralized solution for the management of their nuclear fuel waste. For example, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization’s Adaptive Phased Management and Ontario Power Generation’s proposed deep geologic repository for its non-fuel radioactive waste. Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL), a federal Crown corporation, is responsible for the management of radioactive waste at its sites and at sites for which the Government of Canada has accepted responsibility, including Chalk River Laboratories.

AECL delivers its mandate through a contractual arrangement with Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL), which is owned by the Canadian Nuclear Energy Alliance (CNEA). CNL has proposed to construct a Near Surface Disposal Facility at Chalk River Laboratories. AECL has reviewed and supports CNL's planned approach and its proposed project for addressing AECL's decommissioning and radioactive waste responsibilities at the site.

The proposed Near Surface Disposal Facility project at Chalk River Laboratories is undergoing an environmental assessment pursuant to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), Canada's independent nuclear regulator, is the responsible authority and will review and thoroughly assess CNL's proposals. The CNSC has asked CNL to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the project in order to identify and assess all potential environmental effects; and to propose mitigation measures to avoid or minimize any adverse environmental effects.

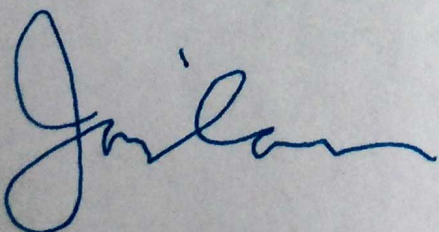
Through discussions with CNSC staff and CNL's consideration of the comments provided by Canadians during the review of the draft Near Surface Disposal Facility Environmental Impact Statement, CNL has indicated that it will only dispose of waste in a facility that meets the guidelines for low-level radioactive waste set out by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Other federal authorities—including Environment and Climate Change Canada, Health Canada, and Natural Resources Canada—as well as the Quebec and Ontario governments, are also participating in and contributing to the environmental assessment based on their expert input and knowledge.

The CNSC will ensure its environmental assessment and licensing decisions are based on Canadian legislation, regulations, policy and guidance, and will take into account international standards and guidance documents. The CNSC will only allow the project to proceed if it is convinced it is safe for Canadians and the environment, both in the short and long term.

All that said, I would be happy to continue discussing whether our governments should pursue a policy on the long-term management of non-fuel radioactive waste.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Carr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

The Honourable Jim Carr, P.C., M.P.